

Code of ethics

Established as part of the implementation of the integrity charter for development cooperation

Note: For the sake of conciseness and unless otherwise specified, the masculine gender has been used as a gender-neutral form that includes both feminine and masculine.

Introduction

For over 60 years, Damien Foundation has been internationally renowned for its medical expertise in support of vulnerable populations affected by tuberculosis and neglected tropical diseases such as leprosy and leishmaniasis. We share this public health expertise through close and equitable partnerships wherever we serve communities and advance our research.

Our mission is to provide equal access to robust healthcare services throughout the world, and to ensure that no one suffers or dies from preventable and treatable diseases.

Given that poverty is one of the main barriers to healthcare and a determining factor in the spread of disease, we ensure that the persons affected receive the essential socio-economic conditions necessary for the success of their treatment.

To ensure our actions have impact, we rely on a participatory approach and encourage individual empowerment by actively involving patients and their communities in our decisions.

We ensure the continuity of our action by mobilising the resources and funding necessary to carry out our mission.

The main values of Damien Foundation are pluralism, independence, integrity, responsibility and respect. Inspired by Father Damien (1840-1889), a humanitarian pioneer, Damien Foundation is an NGO that is open to all, stands firmly against any form of discrimination, and has no political, religious or financial affiliation.

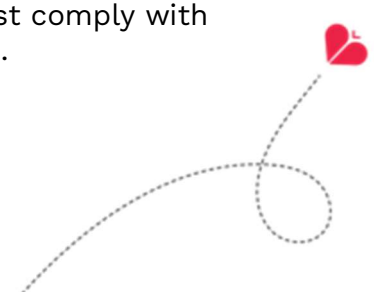
Ethical principles

The code of ethics sets forth the principles and commitments that all Damien Foundation stakeholders must live by, and the behaviour they must adopt to safeguard the organisation's integrity.

Damien Foundation stakeholders include the General Assembly, the Administrative Body, employees, volunteers, people affected by disease, suppliers, partners, funders and donors. An employee is any person who has a work contract with Damien Foundation.

The code of ethics is approved by the Administrative Body and by the members of the General Assembly. All employees receive a copy; they must make sure they understand and commit to abide by its provisions. Volunteers, suppliers, third-party partners and donors are provided with sufficient information regarding the code of ethics.

It is important to note that all Damien Foundation stakeholders must comply with Belgian laws and those in effect in the countries in which they work.



The organisation's management shall set an example by creating a supportive environment in which to promote and apply the code of ethics. The organisation shall foster open dialogue in order to identify problems and potential risks promptly.

Any person who experiences a problem, or who in good faith believes that a principle of the code of ethics has been infringed, must report it by any means he/she sees fit. This concerns individual situations as well as collective tensions or more significant non-resolved incidents with regards to day-to-day activities. An alert and/or complaint procedure shall be implemented, and is described in a specific document available to all concerned.

Individuals who report a suspected violation shall not be sanctioned or discriminated against, provided they have acted in good faith, with respect, and without intent to harm, regardless of whether the facts prove to be wrong or do not lead to further action.

If an investigation confirms the allegations, necessary disciplinary sanctions and/or legal proceedings will ensue.

Respect and protection of privacy

Respect of individuals

Damien Foundation firmly believes in solidarity, dialogue, social justice and diversity.

Relations among stakeholders are based on trust, goodwill and mutual respect.

Every person, without exception, is treated equally, and shall not be subject to discrimination based on:

- The 5 so-called 'racial' criteria: alleged race, skin colour, nationality, ancestry, and national or ethnic origin
- Disability
- Philosophical or religious beliefs
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Wealth
- Civil status
- Political opinions
- Union activities
- Health
- Physical or genetic characteristics
- Birth
- Social origin
- Language

Damien Foundation upholds a zero-tolerance policy regarding any form of harassment.

Any form of discrimination, intimidation, humiliation and violence, whether physical, sexual, psychological, verbal, or other; explicit or implicit; isolated or repeated; major or minor; is prohibited.



Any form of unwanted intimacy is prohibited. Any conduct of sexual nature with people within the organisation is prohibited. Possessing or distributing pornographic material is prohibited.

Protection of privacy

Sensitive and confidential information is treated with the utmost discretion. This concerns all Damien Foundation stakeholders as well as people affected by diseases treated by the organisation.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) laws are applied and implemented.

Use of assets and information

Damien Foundation assets must be protected and used carefully and sensibly. Their use is restricted to professional activities unless otherwise authorised.

Any misuse of assets or information, and any act of fraud, theft, or misappropriation is prohibited.

Confidentiality

Professional secrecy involves any non-public information, which, if divulged or used inappropriately, could harm the organisation (e.g.: financial status, strategic plans, marketing projects, development strategies, confidential information provided by partners).

Confidential information shall not be used outside the organisation, even after leaving it. If deemed necessary to share said information with a third party, a confidentiality agreement must be previously established.

Image and reputation

Only authorised individuals are allowed to speak on behalf of Damien Foundation.

Employees, volunteers, and members of the General Assembly and the Administrative Body must behave responsibly when using media, including social media, in both their professional and personal lives.

Conducting our activities with integrity

Any form of abuse of power, such as corruption, conflict of interest, partiality, etc. is prohibited. This applies to all Damien Foundation stakeholders.

Conflict of interest

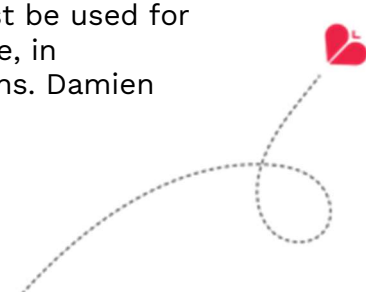
Everyone shall be attentive to potential conflicts of interest so as to avoid any situation that may compromise objective decision-making. Any risk of conflict of interest with suppliers, spouses or family members must be avoided.

Corruption

It is prohibited to offer, promise or accept any advantage with the intent to influence an action or a decision. Participation in any form of corruption endangers the organisation's reputation and will face immediate sanctions.

Fundraising

Donations, funds and subsidies received by Damien Foundation must be used for the purposes set forth in the organisation's statutes, or, if applicable, in accordance with agreements established with the funding institutions. Damien



Foundation is a member of *Récolte de fonds Éthique (RE-EF) ASBL* (Belgian non-profit association for ethical fundraising) and adheres to its code of ethics.

Independence and impartiality

All actions must be solely carried out in the interest of the organisation and require absolute neutrality. Personal beliefs must in no way compromise the professionalism and proper functioning of the organisation.

Any activity that could endanger the interests or reputation of Damien Foundation is prohibited. Internal and external communications must be measured and discreet.

Political interference that may compromise the organisation's impartiality, neutrality and independence will not be tolerated.

Participation in public life

All stakeholders are responsible for their own behaviour and decisions.

Those who represent Damien Foundation shall behave respectfully and loyally so as to protect the organisation's image and reputation.

Only those authorised to do so may speak publicly on behalf of Damien Foundation.

Professional commitment

All stakeholders shall carry out their professional duties in a equitable manner, and shall strictly comply with laws, agreements, rules and regulations in effect. Any culpable negligence shall be met with sanctions.

Employees shall carry out their job duties efficiently and effectively, in accordance with their skills. Cooperation, teamwork, dialogue and trust contribute to the organisation's development.

The organisation's management and decision-making bodies shall manifest exemplary leadership.

Damien Foundation promotes a stimulating professional environment, encourages development, and continuously looks for resources in order to achieve its goals.

Transparency

Behaving transparently means communicating openly when things are going well for the organisation and also when they are not.

Relevant and reliable information is available to the organisation's stakeholders and to the general public.

Took effect on 28/11/2020

Updated on 25/11/2024

The aforementioned provisions came into effect upon their approval at the Damien Foundation General Assembly on 28 November 2020.

